Dr. KIDDER'S

SERMON

Preached before the

Lord Mayor, &c.

AT

S. SEPULCHRES CHURCH,

ON

Easter-Tuesday, *April* 22. 1690.

PILKINGTON Mayor, &c.

Martis xxix. Aprilis 1690. *Annoq;* *Regni Regis & Reginæ*, Willielmi & Mariæ, Angliæ, &c. *Secundo.*

THis COURT doth desire Dr. *Kidder*, Dean of *Peterborough*, to Print his Sermon, Preached on *Tuesday* in *Easter-Week* last, before the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of *London* at S. *Sepulchres*.

Wagstaffe.

THE

Duty of the Rich:

IN A

SERMON

Preached before the

LORD MAYOR,

AND

Court of Aldermen,

AND

CITIZENS of *LONDON*:

AT

S. Sepulchres Church,

ON

Easter-Tuesday, April 22d. 1690.

By *Richard Kidder*, D. D. and Dean of *Peterborough*.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. H.* for *Brabazon Aylmer* at the Three *Pigeons* against the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*. 1690.

2931:06

To the Right Honourable

Sir *THOMAS PILKINGTON*,

Lord Mayor

OF THE

CITY of *LONDON*,

AND THE

Court of Aldermen.

Right Honourable,

IN obedience to your Order I preſent you with the following Sermon. I heartily wiſh it may gain the End which it aims at; That all Men of Wealth and Publick Influence would improve the advantages they have to the Honour of God and the Good of the Community. It is high time to ſet about it vigorouſly, and that they make it their conſtant care and buſineſs.

Very much Good may be done this way by the united endeavours of thoſe men who have Wealth and Authority: God and all Good men expect it from them: 'Tis at once their duty and their trueſt intereſt. This courſe will be much for the

Honour of this great City, 'twill be its beſt ſecurity, and the beſt means to procure the Divine Protection.

May it pleaſe Almighty God to inſpire you all with a great zeal for the advancement of true Religion, the promoting all works of mercy and beneficence, the encouraging induſtry and diligence, the ſuppreſſing all profaneneſs, the obviating all unchriſtian heats and animoſities, and the doing your utmoſt in your ſeveral places to all theſe great purpoſes. This is the hearty Prayer of

Your moſt aſſured

and humble Servant,

Richard Kidder.

A

SERMON

Preached before

The Lord Mayor, &c.

1 TIM. VI. v. 17, 18, 19.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

THERE is no condition whatever in this world but what is liable to temptation and a ſnare: but none is more obnoxious than that of the proſperous and wealthy. There are many that have

have born poverty and other afflictions well, and not onely born them but improved them too; they have been happy occasions of good to mankind; and most of our attainments have been owing to our afflictions. And the Church of God was never more conspicuous for piety and goodness than when she was poor and persecuted. But on the other hand there are but few men that can bear prosperity well, that can concoct and digest a prosperous and full condition. This is generally too fulsom and rank for the greater part of mankind. Riches are deprecated by the Wiseman in the Book of *Proverbs*: They are attended with great cumber and violent temptations; and as they never make us better, so they do often leave us worse. We are in very great danger when we are prosperous. This the Apostle well knew, and therefore requires *Timothy* to take care in this matter: And that he does with vehemence and great concern; he does not bid him barely to *tell* them that are rich, or *put them in mind* of their danger, but to *charge* them, or to press it home upon them; to rouse and awaken them to a due sense of their *danger* and their *duty*, and of their truest *interest* also. *Charge them*, &c.

Nulla pars vitæ nostræ tam obnoxia aut tenera est, quam quæ maximè placet. Senec.

In

In which words *Timothy* is put upon diſcharging his duty towards thoſe who were rich; and to that purpoſe to warn them what to avoid, what to doe, and what great reaſon they have to comply with this advice. For the more orderly proceeding and better ſpeaking to my words, I ſhall

Firſt, lay before you the *danger* in which rich men are, and what it is they are eſpecially to be cautioned againſt. *That they be not high-minded, and truſt not in uncertain riches.*

Secondly, the Duty of Rich men, or what they ought to be earneſtly put upon: *viz. To truſt in the living God,* to *doe good,* to be *rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate.*

Thirdly, the true intereſt of Rich men, or the motives that may be uſed to perſuade them to the diſcharge of their duty; where I ſhall conſider the importance of what S. *Paul* lays before us to this purpoſe in the words of my Text, *Laying up a good foundation for the time to come,* and that they may *lay hold of eternal life.*

Fourthly, I ſhall make ſome Uſe and Application of what ſhall have been ſaid.

I. (I.) I ſhall lay before you the *danger* in which Rich men are, and what it is they are eſpecially to be cautioned againſt. That they be not *high-minded*, and that they *truſt not in uncertain Riches.*

Great is the danger of plenty and fullneſs; Ezek. xvj. 49. *Pride*, and *fullneſs* of *bread*, and *abundance* of *idleneſs*, met together in *Sodom*. This often extinguiſheth that lively ſenſe that we ought to have of our dependance upon God, renders our Prayers languid and weak, and gives fuel and nouriſhment to our luſts and our vices; it choaks God's word, keeps our faults from our eyes, and makes us unmindfull of the needs of others.

But I ſhall confine my ſelf in this matter to the words of my Text. St. *Paul* would have Rich men charged that they be not *high-minded*. Haughtineſs and Pride, a great opinion of our ſelves, and contempt of our poor Brother, do commonly attend upon Riches. We too often reckon them the pledges of God's favour, and marks of his kindneſs, or the fruits of our own wiſedom or induſtry; and inſtead of being modeſt and thankfull, we grow proud and inſolent. Hence it is that *Moſes* does ſo often charge the

the Iſraelites, that when they ſhould *have eaten* and be *full*, that they *forget not God*, nor *lift up* their *heart*. And there is great reaſon that we ſhould be very carefull that we be not ſwelled with Pride and Vanity upon this account. Deut. vj. 12. viij. 10, 14.

If we conſider things with due application of mind, we ſhall think it a very reaſonable charge given here to the rich, that they be not high-minded: for whatever ground there be for thankfulneſs, here's none for Pride or Arrogance.

Be it ſo that you are rich; 'tis the bleſſing of God alone that hath made you ſo; your accounts will be the greater, and much will be required of all them that have received much. Your wealth does not advance you toward the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Lord hath ſaid it, *A rich man ſhall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And St. *James*, that *he is made low*; and St. *Paul*, that *God hath choſen the weak things of the world.* Again, our Bleſſed Saviour, *Woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your conſolation.* And on the other hand, *Bleſſed be ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.* Riches are ſo far from *helping forward* our Salvation, that they often Matt. xix. 23. Jam. i. 10. 1 Cor. i. 27. Luke vj. 24, 20.

obſtruct it, and always render it more *difficult* and *hazardous.* We muſt give a ſtrict account how we got our Wealth, and how we ſpend it Here's enough to humble us, no ground for Pride or Arrogance. Well might the Apoſtle require *Timothy* to charge them that are rich that they be not high-minded.

But he would have them charged too that they *truſt not in uncertain Riches.* Μηδὲ ἠλπικέναι ἐπὶ πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, i. e. *That they do not confide in the uncertainty of Riches.* There is great reaſon for this charge, if we conſider how commonly Rich men miſcarry in this matter, or how great a folly and evil it is ſo to doe.

Firſt, Rich men do too often truſt in their Riches. We reade of them that *truſt in their* Pſal. xlix. 6. lij. 7. *wealth, and boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their riches.* Too many there are to whom the Pſalmiſt's words may be applied. *Lo, this is the man that made not God his ſtrength, but truſted in the abundance of his riches.* We deſire them paſſionately, and promiſe our ſelves great eaſe and ſatisfaction from them. We too commonly make them our refuge and Pſal. xlij. 10. ſtay, and *when riches encreaſe we ſet our hearts upon them.* Hence we expect eaſe and relief; we pleaſe our ſelves when we think of them,

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and promiſe our ſelves mountains of felicity from them: There is hardly any man of Wealth but is in danger, and therefore had need be charged.

Secondly, This is great folly and a great evil. 'Tis great folly to truſt in uncertainty, to fix our ſtay and our hope upon that which may fail us; to bear and reſt upon any thing that may fail us, and give way, is ſo great a piece of folly that we are not guilty of it in other caſes. Nothing is more uncertain than Riches. This earthly treaſure *moth* and *ruſt doth corrupt, and thieves break through and ſteal.* It makes it ſelf *wings* and *flies away.* It lies at the mercy of wind and weather, of fire and water, of robbers and falſe people, of a multitude of accidents and contingencies. Matt. vj. 20.

Beſides, to truſt in uncertain Riches is a great evil: 'Tis to make Riches our God. 'Tis Idolatry in the trueſt ſenſe. 'Tis no matter though we build no Altars, though we offer no Bloud nor Incenſe, if we truſt in them, and give them our hearts, we make them our God, and ſhut our ſelves out of the Kingdom of Heaven. *How hardly* (ſays our Saviour) *ſhall they that have Riches enter into the Kingdom of God!* They are an hindrance Mark x. 23, 24, 25.

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to them that *have* them; but for them that *Truſt in them*, as our Saviour adds afterward,
1 Cor. vj. 9. *It is eaſier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for ſuch men to enter into the Kingdom of God.* This *Idolatry* will exclude us from the inheritance of God's Kingdom. This puts us out of God's favour and the ſtate of grace; this friend of the World is the enemy of God: And ſuch a friendſhip of this world is that Idolatry which is wont to be expreſſed by Adultery, or Spiritual Fornication: And this ſeems to be the importance of what St.
Jam. iv. 4. *James* ſays. *Ye adulterers and adultereſſes, know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God?* Our Saviour aſſures us that we
Matt. vj. 24. cannot ſerve *two Maſters, God* and *Mammon.*

II. (II.) I conſider the Duty of Rich men, or, what they ought to be earneſtly put upon: *viz. To truſt in the living God, to doe good, to be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate.*

Firſt, *To truſt in the living God.* Not that this is the peculiar duty of the Rich, for 'tis the Duty of all: But the Rich are conſidered here as prone to truſt in uncertain Riches, and in oppoſition to that are to be warned

ned and charged to *truſt in the living God.*

And that very agreeably in this place. For whereas Riches are periſhing things, flitting and uncertain, unſatisfactory and diſproportionate, unable to make us happy and at eaſe; and are ſo far from it that they often perplex us and pierce us with many ſorrows: 'tis very fit they ſhould be directed where to place their truſt and their hope, and ſo wiſely to place it that they may not be diſappointed, and nothing could have in this caſe been adviſed more agreeably than this, that they ſhould *Truſt in the living God.*

In the *living God* and not in *fading* and *periſhing* Riches. In God who lives, and lives for ever; who is the firſt and the laſt, and always the ſame: who lives from himſelf and can never dye or fail to be, and be what He is, with whom is no variableneſs or ſhadow of turning. 'Tis worth our while to make him our truſt who cannot fail us, to place our hope in Him who onely hath immortality. What can our Riches avail! what comfort can they afford in the day of tryall! what proportion do they bear to our needs, or to our capacities! what ſtupendious folly is it to truſt in ſuch uncertainty! To direct

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our thirſty and parched Souls to theſe empty and broken veſſels, and to neglect the fountain of living waters! On the ſide of Riches there's nothing but *vexation* or *vanity*, but varniſh and uncertainty, a ſplendid nothing, that hath baffled and abuſed the Sons of men from one generation to another. On the other hand if we truſt in God, in the living God, we ſhall never be deluded with falſe hopes, never fruſtrated in any juſt expectation. We ſhall be provided for by an infinite Wiſedom, protected by an Almighty power, and be ſure to lack nothing.

Here's a motive to this in my Text, *Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.* We ought to truſt in the *giver*, not in the *gift*; to hope in Him that gives us all things: and not only our being, our life and breath, not onely the neceſſaries of our being, but the comforts and ſatisfactions of it alſo: not onely what is needfull, but what is for delight and for ornament; for entertainment and careſs; He hath advanced the Rich above their Fellow-creatures, and dealt out his favours with a bountifull and liberal hand. And therefore are the Rich particularly obliged to truſt in ſo great and kind a Benefactour: This motive

tive alſo is of great force to ſet home the remaining Duties of the Rich, which follow in the next words, and which *Timothy* is required to charge them with: *viz.*

Secondly, *That they doe good*; *i.e.* that they beſtow benefits: that *they be rich in good works*; that is, that they abound in theſe things: *Ready to diſtribute*; *i. e.* liberal, and prompt, and always prone to doe them: *Willing to communicate*; κοινωνικὸς· *i. e.* that they be of a publick ſpirit, not of a narrow and private one; but doing that which is for the good of the Community of which they are but members.

I ſhall wave the critical and nice enquiry into the original words as they lie in the Greek Text: But yet I ſhall not forbear to conſider the words particularly in order to my laying before you the ſeveral branches of that duty which is incumbent upon Rich men.

Firſt, *That they doe good*: This is very comprehenſive, and extendeth very far. To all *ſorts* of *Good works*; to works of *Piety* to God-ward; of *Juſtice* and *Mercy* to our *Brother*; *Sobriety* and *Temperance*, with regard to our ſelves: But more particularly and ſpecially it takes in all benefactions towards our neighbour; and as his needs are many and

various, ſo are the parts of this Duty likewiſe. Under this Head are contained, the cloathing the naked, the feeding the hungry, miniſtring to the ſick, comforting the afflicted, vindicating the injured, encouraging the diligent, and adviſing and inſtructing the weak and ignorant. Such acts of kindneſs are not to be limited, either to *perſons* or *times*. We muſt doe good to all, to our *enemies*, to *ſtrangers*, and to men who differ from us: To the *preſent Generation* and to *Poſterity*.

Secondly, *That they be rich in good works*: They muſt do them plentifully, give portions to ſix, and alſo to ſeven; not confine themſelves to one ſort of charity, or to ſome ſmall meaſures, but as God hath given them great plenty, ſo muſt they give largely too. 'Tis not enough for them who abound in wealth to give away a little broken meat at a Gate, or a few Gowns at the return of an annual ſolemnity, or to throw away now and then a few looſe grains among the poor. This is not to be rich in good works. 'Twould well become theſe men to think of ſome endowments, or conſiderable additions to Churches or Hoſpitals, or of erecting Workhouſes,

houſes, and redeeming a number of men from Priſons and great miſeries.

Thirdly, that *they be ready to diſtribute*; *i. e.* that they be prompt and prone, and always diſpoſed to doe good works. There are thoſe who will not refuſe to comply when they are put upon a good work: they will not ſtand out and be ſingular when others contribute, but yet they are not forward to promote, nor much pleaſed to be moved this way. But St. *Paul* would have Rich men of a temper and inclination this way.

Fourthly, *Willing to communicate.* Κοινωνικούς. That is, of a publick ſpirit, deſigning the good of the Community, and preferring it not onely to private intereſt and advantage, but to private and particular charity alſo. There are ſome things of that nature that they are for the good of a Kingdom, of Cities and Societies of men; for the good of the preſent, and of ſucceeding Generations. And the farther any good work reacheth the better it is, and the greater imitation of God's goodneſs, who is good unto all, and whoſe mercy is above all his works.

The ſubſtance then of the charge laid here upon Rich men amounts to this: *viz.* That

they exerciſe themſelves in all ſort of Benefactions, and that they doe it largely, according to the proportion of their Wealth and Store; that they be always prone and inclined this way, and that they be more eſpecially addicted to thoſe good works which promote the good of the Community. I proceed to conſider,

III. (III.) The true Intereſt of Rich men, or the motives that may be uſed to perſuade them to this diſcharge of their Duty; where I ſhall conſider the importance of what Saint *Paul* lays before us in the words of my Text, *Laying up a good foundation for the time to come, and that they may lay hold of eternal life.* And that you may take in the following particulars,

1. This is the true end and uſe of Riches. The *end* for which they were beſtowed, and the beſt *improvement* that can be made of them. They were never deſigned to be hoarded up and laid by, but to be employed for the honour of God, and the benefit of each other. 'Tis the uſe of them that gives them their price and value, and ſtamps them with the faireſt character: Not to be uſefull differs

fers very little from not to be at all. He that hides his Talent is as if he had never received it. He that keeps his wealth (as a Gaoler keeps his Priſoner) voids the end for which 'twas given. Such a man detains good from thoſe to whom it is due, and is falſe to his great Lord that entruſts him, and his wealth becomes Mammon of unrighteouſneſs. For ſo Riches are not onely when they are ill gotten, but when they are detained from the uſes for which they were beſtowed. We are but Stewards and Truſtees, and not to diſpenſe is to fail of our truſt, which is Injuſtice in the ſight of God and Men.

2. 'Tis the beſt way to make them a bleſſing, and a durable one: A bleſſing to our ſelves, and to our Poſterity alſo. A Bleſſing I ſay, for Riches alone, and ſeparately conſidered, are not a Bleſſing. The Wiſe man deprecates them as an Evil, or a Snare. And *Solomon* ſays, *There is a ſore evil which I have ſeen under the Sun, namely, Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt: But thoſe Riches periſh by evil travail: And he begetteth a Son, and there is nothing in his hand.* How many have been ruined by Wealth, and have periſhed by Plenty! Poverty, as great an evil Eccl. v. 13,14.

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as we think it, hath leſs of danger, and hath done leſs harm than Riches. If Poverty be reckoned (as 'tis in the Law of *Moſes*) among the Curſes, yet *Philo* the Jew obſerves it is placed among them, ὡς κυριώτατον κακόν i. e. *as the lighteſt evil*: And therefore Riches are not to be placed among the greateſt Bleſſings. They are as they are uſed, and they muſt be uſed with great care and caution; they are like a rich Soil that will indeed produce excellent Fruits, but then it muſt be cultivated and well planted, weeded and kept clean, or elſe it may produce what is noxious and miſchievous: The Soil will not of it ſelf afford the beſt Productions. Riches will corrupt and run to putrefaction as well as other things: They muſt be ſeaſoned and ſtirred, or elſe they'll corrupt and ſtink, and that not without the greateſt danger to the poſſeſſors of them. Riches are like great waters, if they *ſtagnate* they are hurtfull; they are wholſom if they run. 'Tis the τὸ στάσιμον τῦ πλέτε, *the ſtagnation of wealth* that is dangerous, or uſeleſs and unprofitable at leaſt. By Alms and Good Works we ſeaſon our Wealth, and preſerve it from periſhing; we pare away its hurtfull ſuperfluity, and noxious qualities.

Philo. Περὶ Ἀρῶν.

Baſil de Divit. Conc. V.

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We muſt doe by our Wealth as the beautifull Woman that was taken Captive from an Heathen Country, was obliged to doe by the Law of *Moſes*: Before ſhe could be joined to an *Iſraelite*, ſhe was obliged to ſhave her Head, and pare her Nails, and lay by the garments of her Captivity, and bewail her Father and Mother. There is in Wealth a *præputium* that muſt be cut off; and we muſt doe as the *Jews* were obliged to doe by their Trees which they planted in *Canaan*, ſet aſide ſome of their Fruits as uncircumciſed, and not take all the increaſe to our ſelves: In a word, Riches are no bleſſing to him who does not exerciſe himſelf in good works: They are ſo far from it, that they are a Snare and a Curſe. Nor are ſuch a man's poſterity like to be much the better for ſuch an uncircumciſed Eſtate, unleſs they take the advice which *Daniel* gave to the King of *Babylon*. *Break off thy ſins by Righteouſneſs, and thine iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor: if it may be a lengthning to thy tranquillity.* The ſureſt way of leaving a bleſſing upon an Eſtate to our poſterity, will be to beſtow great portions of it in Works of Mercy and Piety. *I have been young, and now am old*, (ſays the Devout Pſalmiſt,)

Deut. xxi. v. 10, &c.

Lev. xix. 23.

Dan. iv. 27.

miſt,) *yet have I not ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging bread.* Who he means by the righteous, we may learn from his following words: He is *ever mercifull and lendeth, and his ſeed is bleſſed.* That Wealth and Patrimony is like to laſt longeſt, that comes thus commended to the Bleſſing of God.

Pſal. xxxvij. 25, 26.

Patrimonium Deo creditum nec Reſp. eripit, nec fiſcus invadit, nec calumnia aliqua forenſis evertit. Cyprian.

3. 'Tis a great act of pure Religion, and that is what we all profeſs and pretend to: 'Tis not onely an *Ornament*, but 'tis a *part*; not onely a *part*, but a *main*, and *eſſential*, and indiſpenſable part of it too; and without which all that we profeſs or doe is nothing better than mere *pretence* and *ſhew*. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their affliction, and to keep* ones ſelf *unſpotted from the World.* Let men pretend to *Faith* as much as they will, let them boaſt and vaunt of it as they pleaſe; *As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.* Let others pretend to what degree they pleaſe (even the moſt Seraphick) of the *love* of God: Yet *whoſo hath this World's good, and ſeeth his Brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* Let the proud

Matt. xxij. 37.

Jam. i. 27.

Chap. ij. 26.

1 John iij. 17.

Pha-

Phariſee boaſt of his frequent *faſting*, of his bowing down his head like a Bull-ruſh, and ſpreading under him Sackcloth and Aſhes. *Is not this the faſt that I have choſen*, (ſays God?) *To deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor, that are caſt out, to thy houſe? when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh?* And for *Sacrifices* of old, though they were of God's inſtitution, and made a great part of his Worſhip; yet He declares that he preferred Mercy before them: *I deſired Mercy, and not Sacrifice.* For all the other *inſtruments* or *means* of Religion, how ſerviceable ſoever they may be, are yet not worthy to be compared to Brotherly Love and Charity, to Acts of Mercy and Relief. Iſai. lviij. v. 7. Hoſea vj. 6.

There are two ways eſpecially by which we do expreſs a Religious frame of Mind; *viz.* By imitating of God; and, Secondly, by a thankfull acknowledging his Mercies: Both theſe are well done by Acts of Mercy.

Firſt, By Acts of Mercy and Beneficence we imitate God, and by that expreſs a Religious temper of Mind. To imitate Him whom we pretend to worſhip, is very reaſonable and ſafe: And if we live by this Rule,

we ſhall make conſiderable attainments in Religion. Hence it is uſed as a great Motive under the Law of *Moſes*, *That they ſhould be Holy*, becauſe *God was Holy*. And our Saviour does more than once uſe this Topick, when he perſuades his Followers to forgive their Enemies, and to doe good; He would have them mercifull, as their Father in Heaven is mercifull: And 'tis believed the Heathens upon this account were wicked, becauſe their Deities were repreſented as ſuch; they were wicked *Magiſterio Deorum*.

Hic eſt vetuſtiſſimus referendi benè merentibus gratiam mos, ut tales numinibus adſcribantur, Plin. *Nat. Hiſt. l.* 11. *c.* 7.

But the wiſer of the Heathens owned God to be good, and the greateſt Benefactor to Mankind; and that the way to imitate the Gods, was to doe Benefits; And they were ſo far of that perſuaſion, that they reckoned their great Benefactors among their Deities. We have here a powerfull Motive to doe good, *&c.* from the Example of God, and of our Bleſſed Saviour, who went about doing good. God is good unto all, and his Mercies are above all his Works: If we think we have reaſon to worſhip Him, we have the ſame to imitate Him, and to be Followers of God as dear Children.

Secondly,

Secondly, By Acts of Mercy, we make an acknowledgment or recognition of his Mercies to us; by which we doe likewiſe expreſs a Religious frame and temper of Mind. This is the way to own him to be the Author of all our Mercies: And when out of gratitude, and a ſenſe of his favours, and for his ſake, we doe good to our Brother, we doe effectually demonſtrate, that our Religion is more than bare profeſſion and pretence. And here is another very powerfull Motive to prevail with them that are Rich in this World to doe good, *&c.* 'Tis due from them as a Tribute of Praiſe to God, who alone hath made the difference: Among the *Jews* this was done by certain Euchariſtical Sacrifices, where the Offerer expreſſed the ſenſe he had of the Divine Mercies by his Oblation; of which a very ſmall part onely was offered upon the Altar, the reſt was divided between the Prieſt and the Offerer. And as the Offerer had the bulk or main part of the Offering to himſelf, ſo he was obliged by the Law of *Moſes* to take care that it might not be laid by any long time for his own private uſe; it was to be eaten quickly, and conſequently not eaten by himſelf alone:

But his Neighbour was to be partaker with him. Charity and Hoſpitality was thus provided for: 'Twas not the Offering that God accepted alone, but the gratefull Mind and the thankfull Recognition of the Offerer: And He was to expreſs that by his kindneſs to his Brother.

Hath God given you Wealth, and abundance? Make your Acknowledgments to Him who alone hath made the difference: Let it appear that you have a due Senſe of his Bounty. How many ways may you expreſs the great Senſe you have on your Mind of the peculiar Mercy of God to you? There are ſome that want bread and cloathing; ſome are diſeaſed, others in priſon; ſome hopefull Youths will want inſtruction, and a way of livelihood, without your charity and care: You may, if you pleaſe, comfort many a mournfull Widow, ſuppport many fatherleſs Children, help many diſconſolate Strangers, keep many from Idleneſs and more from Starving: God hath done much for you, is it not fit you ſhould caſt about what to doe for Him? For Him who hath given you all things richly to enjoy; For Him who is your greateſt Friend and

and Benefactor; For Him who hath the greateſt right to you and yours: Shall we ſpend upon our Luſts, or in the Service of the Devil, what God hath ſo bountifully beſtowed upon us? This would be the greateſt impiety and ingratitude at once.

I remember *Cyprian* upon this occaſion brings in the Devil (accompanied with his numerous train) vaunting over our Saviour: *Ego pro iſtis quos mecum vides, nec alapas accepi, nec flagella ſuſtinui, nec crucem pertuli*, &c. *For theſe followers of mine* (ſays he) *I have received no blows, endured no ſtripes, nor born a Croſs, nor ſhed my bloud, a price of their redemption; I promiſe no heavenly Kingdom, no immortality in Paradiſe; And yet* (ſays he) *they preſent me with great, and precious, and coſtly gifts*, &c. *Tuos tales munerarios, Chriſte, demonſtra*, &c. *Shew me, O Chriſt, ſuch followers of thee among the rich and the wealthy, who are encouraged by the promiſe of Eternal life.* We ſhall be without excuſe, if we doe not that out of gratitude to God and our Saviour, which others doe in the ſervice of the Devil, and proſecution of their luſts. *De Opere & Eleemoſyn.*

4. To doe good, &c. is the way to ſecure to our ſelves Eternal life; 'Tis at leaſt a neceſſary

neceſſary condition on our part, and the way to it; without it we muſt never expect that Bleſſed ſtate. And thus much is intimated to us in the words of my Text, which come next to be conſidered: *Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal life.* 'Tis conſidered as a foundation, which though it doe not raiſe, yet it muſt precede the following ſuperſtructure; Our hope of Eternal life falls to the ground without this courſe: And if we would build to any height or purpoſe, we muſt lay a good foundation firſt: But the Greek word we render *foundation*, is thought to ſignifie ſomewhat elſe here, and that as agreeably to my preſent purpoſe: And this *a writing that is obligatory*, or a writing that gives the Creditor caution, and a right to recover his debt: And this 'tis ſuppoſed to ſignifie in correſpondence to a certain Hebrew word that anſwers to it. And thus this Greek word is ſuppoſed to ſignifie in the following Epiſtle, *The foundation ſtandeth ſure*; That is, God's Covenant or Promiſe: For it follows, *Having this Seal*, &c. A Seal belongs properly enough to a writing or inſtrument of Contract, but not to a foundation

2 Tim. ij. 19.

tion vvhich lies under-ground: And in this ſenſe they that doe good may be ſaid to have good ſecurity that they ſhall not loſe their revvard; and 'tis the beſt and ſureſt vvhatſoever: *Quas dederas tantùm ſemper habebis opes*; *He that gives to the poor, lendeth to the Lord*; and He hath engaged to *re-pay* him: The Revvard is due novv by Covenant and Promiſe: *Henceforth* (ſays St. *Paul*) *there is laid up for me a Crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give me at that day.* We diſclaim the *Merit*, but muſt believe the *Neceſſity* of Good Works, in order to obtaining Eternal life: And this vve muſt doe if vve believe the Holy Scriptures; They put us upon them as the vvay to Glory and Immortality. Thus our Saviour, *Sell that ye have, and give Alms: Provide your ſelves bags which Wax not old; a treaſure in the Heavens that faileth not.* Again, *Make to your ſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs; that when ye fail, they may receive you* (*i. e.* ye may be received) *into everlaſting habitations. Give diligence* (ſays St. *Peter*) *to make your calling and election ſure.* This is indeed according to our ordinary Copies; but 'tis othervviſe in ſome other

Prov. xix. 17.

2 Tim. ij. 8.

Luke xij. 33.

xvj. 9.

2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

Copy

Copy of the Greek: Σπουδάσατε ἵνα διὰ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων, &c. *i. e.* Give diligence, that by Good Works ye make your Calling and Election ſure. It followvs, *For ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you abundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* All this agrees exactly vvith the vvords of my Text, *Laying in ſtore*, &c. and affords a mighty Motive to doe good: He that does good, advances tovvard Heaven; does that vvhich tends to the leſſening his account, and making ſure his future Happineſs: He that ſhevvs Mercy for God's ſake, ſhall not fail to receive it vvhen he needs it moſt; and vve ſhall need it at that Great Day. Theſe things vve firmly believe, or vve doe not: If vve doe not, vvhy doe vve profeſs the belief of them? If vve doe, vve need no other Motive to doe good: For vve take the vviſeſt courſe vvhen vve exchange Periſhing for Eternal Riches; vvhen by Works of Mercy here vve ſtore up a reverſion of Mercy at that great and terrible Day, vvhen God ſhall treat every Man according to his Works. And vvhen all good Men vvill receive a revvard incomparably beyond vvhat our Eye hath ſeen, our Ear hath heard, or hath

hath entred into the Heart of Man to conceive.

(IV.) I proceed now to make ſome Uſe and Application of what hath been ſaid. IV.

1. We may learn from what hath been ſaid, the great danger of a plentifull and proſperous Condition: St. *Paul* thought ſo, when he put *Timothy* upon the *Charge* here in my Text; *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded*, &c. I wiſh we were duly ſenſible of this truth: If we were, we ſhould now and then tremble for fear we ſhould receive all our good things in this life. Here's enough to humble the moſt proſperous, if it be duly laid to heart: Here's nothing in this World generally more unhappy than that Man is who meets with no Affliction, or with very little. We pity the poor and deſtitute, and we ought to doe it: But, alas! there are young perſons to be ſeen in Coaches, and with Trains after them, that are acquainted with nothing but the glozing Side of the World, that ſpend their Time in Plays and Pleaſures, that in the Judgment of a Wiſe man, are greater Objects of Pity and

Compaſſion. 'Tis a peradventure but theſe young perſons loſe their hopes of a future happineſs: They will be in great danger of forgetting God and themſelves. We treaſure up Wealth for our Children; we deſign to make them great Fortunes, as we call it: But, alas! vain Men that we are, we know not what we doe; We rake together what perhaps will be but the nouriſhment of their Pride, the fuel of their Luſts, and a ſnare to their immortal Souls. God give us a due ſenſe of this danger of proſperity. This would mightily diſpoſe us to doe good: And for that reaſon ſure St. *Paul* makes it the firſt part of the Charge, That *they who are rich in this World, ſhould not be high-minded*, &c.

2. We may alſo learn, from what hath been ſaid, the true uſe of Riches. They are not things deſirable upon their own account: So far from it, that the Wiſe man deprecates them as well as Poverty: And indeed Poverty ſeems the leſs Evil of the Two to him that conſiders things with due Application. But I will not enter into that Enquiry now. 'Tis certain that the Good of Riches lies in this, That they give us an opportunity of doing good in the World.

3. Give

3. Give me leave then to preſs upon you the Duty that lies before you in the words of my Text; *To doe good, to be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate.* If you would have it in other words, you may take it in our Saviour's, *Be merciſull, as your Father which is in heaven is merciſull.* Imitate God and your Bleſſed Saviour; ſhew whoſe Creatures, and whoſe Diſciples you are: And if the Mercies of God, and the Example of *Jeſus* be not powerfull enough; yet your own Intereſt, methinks, ſhould not fail to move you. Be kind to your ſelves, and to your Poſterity. Leſſen your accounts, and lay up a ſtore of Mercy againſt you need it. Do not leave an unſeaſoned and unbleſſed Eſtate to your Children. Correct it, and make it wholſome, that it prove not their Bane. Let it have none of the Cries of the Poor mingled with it. Adorn your Holy Religion, and let all Men ſee the mighty Senſe you have of the Mercies of God, and of the Love of Jeſus. Doe good while you can. Your opportunities will not always remain. The time may come that you may not be able to doe it. Serve your Generation with your Power and Wealth;

Wealth; encourage Piety and Diligence; promote with all your Might the good of Souls, and the benefit of the Publick: This will gain you a Name better than that of Sons and Daughters; 'Twill bring you Peace upon your dying Beds, and (if you continue and abound) you will at last enter into Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. Which that we may all doe, God of his infinite Mercy grant, for Jesus Christ's sake.

FINIS.